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news release

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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DE LA GARZA ASKS FOR USDA REPORT ON BUSINESS SUSPENSION, DEBARMENT POLICIES

For immediate release, Tuesday, October 19, 1993

WASHINGTON -- House Agriculture Committee Chairman Kika de la Garza, D-Texas, has asked Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy to provide an official response to criticisms leveled against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in a series of articles published recently in The New York Times.

Rep. de la Garza's request specifically asks for an explanation of USDA's past and current policies for handling the debarment and suspension of participants in USDA's domestic and foreign food assistance programs who have been involved in wrongdoing.

"I am confident that you can assure the Committee that the current Administration will take immediate and appropriate action to curtail any wrongdoing on the part of any person, company or organization involving any USDA program," Rep. de la Garza wrote in his letter to Secretary Espy.

The New York Times reported that during the Reagan and Bush Administrations USDA exempted itself from various aspects of Executive Order 12549 (issued by President Reagan on Feb. 18, 1986) which required government-wide regulations for suspending or removing participants from Government programs. The articles also maintain that over the past decade USDA has permitted certain companies, organizations and individuals to continue participating in its programs in the face of strong accusations or findings of wrongdoing.

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